(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the compensation paid to next of kins of deceased and the steps taken to reconstruct damaged properties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) The unprecedented snowfall and consequential avalanches in the month of February, 2005 caused extensive damage to life and property. Latest reports from the State indicate that 283 persons besides 14 ITBP, 6 BRO (GREF) and 6 BSF personnel lost their lives, while 28,787 houses were fully/partially damaged. 91,780 hectares of cropped area, 1,03,100 hectares of horticulture were damaged besides loss to sericulture and loss of livestock. There was also damage to the power sector, roads and bridges and other civic infrastructure.

(c) The next of the kin of the deceased are entitled forRs.50,000/- as *ex-gratia* out of the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF). An amount of Rs.50,000/-was also announced by the Prime Minister out of the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. An amount of Rs.50.00 crore was released as an immediate assistance for the calamity. A Central Team has also visited the State for an on the spot damage assessment and requirement of funds. Further assistance will be released based on the report of the Central Team and the norms and guidelines thereof.

Use of Nano Carbon

†2363. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a test on 'Nano Carbon[1] has been done in Defence (Security) Research Laboratory, Kanpur;

(b) whether it is also a fact that clothes made of Nano Carbon would be impenetrable and as a result soldiers of our Army would feel a great relief;

(c) whether it is also a fact that 'Nano Carbon' is also helpful in making tankers and bunkers;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. Defence Material and Stores Research and Development Establishment (DMSRDE), Kanpur, a laboratory of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is engaged in the research and development activities of nano materials including Nano Carbon.

(b) The impenetrability of the protective clothings using Nano Carbon is not yet established. However such clothing is found to be resistant to chemical agents.

(c) to (e) The technology for large scale production of Nano Carbon is in development stage and its structural application has not. yet been established.

Merger of cantonments with municipalities in Uttaranchal

†2364. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has received proposals for converting the cantonments of Ranikhet, Lancedowne and some other cantonments of the States into municipalities or merging them with the nearest municipalities; and

(b) if so, the details of such requests and the steps being taken by the Ministry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Defence has received requests from the public as well as Government of Uttaranchal for converting the cantonment of Ranikhet into a municipality. No proposal for any other cantonment in Uttaranchal has been received.The proposal could not be acceded, since there is no provision for such conversion of cantonments into municipalities under the Cantonments Act, 1924. Cantonments BilI, 2003, however, provides for cantonment to be considered as deemed municipality.

Cross-border action by the Myanmar Army

2365. SHRI SHANKAR ROY CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.